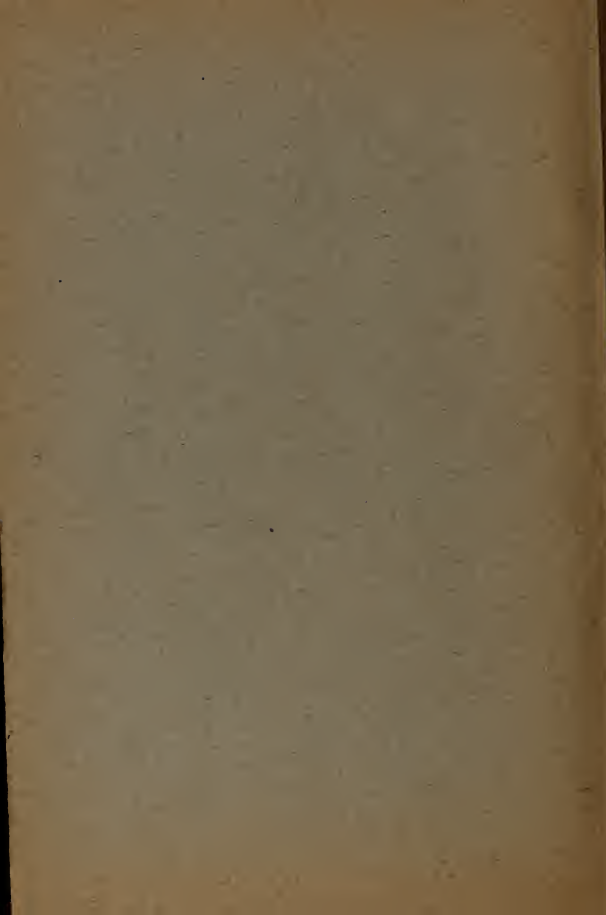


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 330
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Dante's Inferno

Volume II



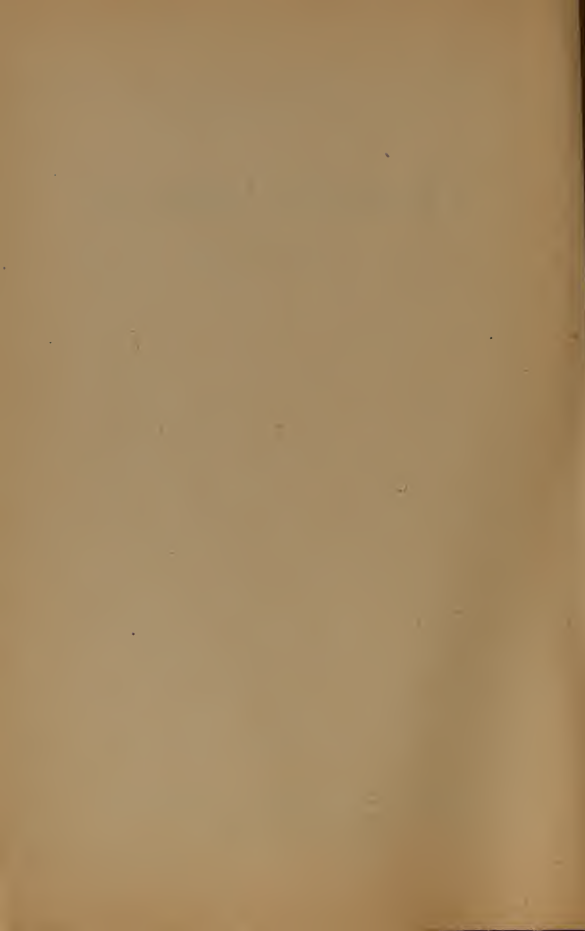
TEN CENT POCKET SERIES NO. 330

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius.

Dante's Inferno

Volume II

**HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS**



DANTE'S INFERNO.

CANTO XVIII.

There is a place within the depths of hell
Called Malebolge, all of rock dark-stained
With hue ferruginous, e'en as the steep
That round it circling winds. Right in the
midst

Of that abominable region yawns
A spacious gulf profound, whereof the frame
Due time shall tell. The circle, that remains,
Throughout its round, between the gulf and
base

Of the high craggy banks, successive forms
Ten bastions, in its hollow bottom raised.

As where, to guard the walls, full many a
foss

Begirds some stately castle, sure defence
Affording to the space within; so here
Were modelled these: and as like fortresses,
E'en from their threshold to the brink without,
Are flanked with bridges; from the rock's low
base

Thus flinty paths advanced, that 'cross the
moles

And dikes struck onward far as to the gulf,
That in one bound collected cuts them off,

Such was the place, wherein we found ourselves

From Geryon's back dislodged. The bard to left

Held on his way, and I behind him moved.

On our right hand new misery I saw,
New pains, new executioners of wrath,
That swarming peopled the first chasm. Below
Were naked sinners. Hitherward they came,
Meeting our faces, from the middle point;
With us beyond, but with a larger stride,
E'en thus the Romans, when the year returns
Of Jubilee, with better speed to rid
The thronging multitudes, their means devise
For such as pass the bridge; that on one side
All front toward the castle, and approach
Saint Peter's fane, on the other towards the
mount.

Each diverse way, along the grisly rock,
Horned demons I beheld, with lashes huge,
That on their back unmercifully smote.
Ah! how they made them bound at the first
stripe!

None for the second waited, nor the third.

Meantime, as on I passed, one met my sight,
Whom soon as viewed, "Of him," cried I,
"not yet

Mine eye hath had his fill." I therefore stayed
My feet to scan, and the teacher kind
Paused with me, and consented I should walk
Backward a space; and the tormented spirit,
Who thought to hide him, bent his visage down.
But it availed him naught; for I exclaimed:

"Thou who does cast thine eye upon the ground,

Unless thy features do belie thee much,
Venedico art thou. But what brings thee
Into this bitter seasoning?" He replied:

"Unwillingly I answer to thy words.

But thy clear speech, that to my mind recalls
The world I once inhabited, constrains me,
Know then 'twas I who led fair Ghisola
To do the Marquis' will, however fame
The shameful tale have bruited. Nor alone
Bologna hither sendeth me to mourn.

Rather with us the place is so o'erthronged,
That not so many tongues this day are taught,
Betwixt the Reno and Savena's stream,
To answer *Sipa* in their country's phrase.
And if of that securer proof thou need,
Remember but our craving thirst for gold."

Him speaking thus, a demon with his thong
Struck and exclaimed, "Away, corrupter! here
Women are none for sale." Forthwith I joined
My escort, and few paces thence we came
To where a rock forth issued from the bank.
That easily ascended, to the right
Upon its splinter turning, we depart
From those eternal barriers. When arrived
Where, underneath, the gaping arch lets pass
The scourged souls: "Pause here," the teacher
said,

"And let these others miserable now
Strike on thy ken; faces not yet beheld,
For that together they with us have walked."

From the old bridge we eyed the pack, who
came

From the other side toward us, like the rest,
Excoriate from the lash. My gentle guide,
By me unquestioned, thus his speech resumed:
"Behold that lofty shade, who this way tends,
And seems too woe-begone to drop a tear.
How yet the regal aspect he retains!

Jason is he, whose skill and prowess won
The ram from Colchis. To the Lemnian isle
His passage thither led him, when those bold
And pitiless women had slain all their males.
There he with tokens and fair witching words
Hypsipyle beguiled, a virgin young,
Who first had all the rest herself beguiled.
Impregnated, he left her there forlorn.
Such is the guilt condemns him to this pain.
Here too Medea's injuries are avenged.
All bear him company, who like deceit
To his have practised. And thus much to know
Of the first vale suffice thee, and of those
Whom its keen torments urge." Now had we
come

Where, crossing the next pier, the straitened
path

Bestrides its shoulders to another arch.

Hence, in the second chasm we heard the
ghosts,
Who gibber in low melancholy sounds,
With wide-stretched nostrils snort, and on
themselves
Smit with their palms. Upon the banks a
scurf,
From the foul steam condensed, encrusting
hung,
That held sharp combat with the sight and
smell.

So hollow is the depth, that from no part,
Save on the summit of the rocky span,
Could I distinguish aught. Thus far we came;
And thence I saw, within the foss below,
A crowd immersed in ordure, that appeared
Druff of the human body. There beneath
Searching with eye inquisitive, I marked
One with his head so grimed, 'twere hard to
deem

If he were clerk or layman. Loud he cried:
"Why greedily thus bendest more on me,
Than on these other filthy one, thy ken?"

"Because, if true my memory," I replied,
"I heretofore have seen thee with dry locks,
And thou Alessio art, of Lucca sprung.
Therefore than all the rest I scan thee more."

Then beating on his brain, these words he
spake:

"Me thus low down my flatteries have sunk,
Wherewith I ne'er enough could glut my
tongue."

My leader thus: "A little further stretch
Thy face, that thou the visage well mayst note
Of that besotted, sluttish courtezan,
Who there doth rend her with defiled nails,
Now crouching down, now risen on her feet.
Thais is this, the harlot, whose false lip
Answered her doting paramour that asked,
'Thankest me much!'—'Say rather, wondrously,'
And, seeing this, here satiate be our view."

CANTO XIX.

Woe to thee, Simon Magus! woe to you,
His wretched followers! who the things of God,

Which should be wedded unto goodness, them,
Rapacious as ye are, do prostitute
For gold and silver in adultery.

Now must the trumpet sound to you, since
yours

Is the third chasm. Upon the following vault
We now had mounted, where the rock impends
Directly o'er the centre of the foss.

Wisdom Supreme! how wonderful the art,
Which thou dost manifest in heaven, in earth,
And in the evil world, how just a meed
Allotting by thy virtue unto all.

I saw the livid stone, throughout the sides
And in its bottom full of apertures,
All equal in their width, and circular each.
Nor ample less nor larger they appeared
Than, in Saint John's fair dome of me be-
loved,

Those framed to hold the pure baptismal
streams,

One of the which I brake, some few years past,
To save a whelming infant; and be this
A seal to undeceive whoever doubts

The motive of my deed. From out the mouth
Of every one emerged a sinner's feet,
And of the legs high upward as the calf.

The rest beneath was hid. On either foot
The soles were burning; whence the flexile
joints

Glanced with such violent motion, as had snapt
Asunder cords or twisted withs. As flame,
Feeding on unctuous matter, glides along
The surface, scarcely touching where it moves;
So here, from heel to point, glided the flames.

"Master! say who is he, than all the rest

Glancing in fiercer agony, on whom
A ruddier flame doth prey?" I thus inquired.

"If thou be willing," he replied, "that I
Carry thee down, where least the slope bank
falls,

He of himself shall tell thee, and his wrongs."

I then: "As pleases thee, to me is best.

Thou art my lord; and know'st that ne'er I
quit

Thy will: what silence hides, that knowest
thou."

Thereat on the fourth pier we came, we
turned,

And on our left descended to the depth,

A narrow strait, and perforated close,

Nor from his side my leader set me down,

Till to his orifice he brought whose limb

Quivering expressed his pang. "Whoe'er thou
art,

Sad spirit! thus reversed, and as a stake

Driven in the soil," I in these words began;

"If thou be able, utter forth thy voice."

There stood I like the friar, that dost shrive

A wretch for murder doomed, who, e'en when
fixed,

Calleth him back whence death awhile delays.

He shouted: "Ha! already standest there?

Already standest there, O Boniface!

By many a year the writing played me false.

So early dost thou surfeit with the wealth,

For which thou fearedst not in guile to take

The lovely lady, and then mangle her?

I felt as those who, piercing not the drift

Of answer made them, stand as if exposed

In mockery, nor know what to reply;

When Virgil thus admonished: "Tell him quick.

"I am not he, not he whom thou believest." And I, as was enjoined me, straight replied, That heard, the spirit all did wrench his feet, And, sighing, next in woeful accent spake: "What then of me requirest? If to know So much imports thee, who I am, that thou Hast therefore down the bank descended, learn That in the mighty mantle I was robed, And of a she-bear was indeed the son, So eager to advance my whelps, that there My having in my purse above I stowed, And here myself. Under my head are dragged The rest, my predecessors in the guilt Of simony. Stretched at their length, they lie Along an opening in the rock. 'Midst them I also low shall fall, soon as he comes, For whom I took thee, when so hastily I questioned. But already longer time Hath past, since my soles kindled, and I thus Upright have stood, than in his doom to stand

Planted with fiery feet. For after him, One yet of deeds more ugly shall arrive. From forth the west, a shepherd without law, Fated to cover both his form and mine. He a new Jason shall be called, of whom In Maccabees we read; and favor such As to that priest his king indulgent showed, Shall be of France's monarch shown to him."

I know not if I here too far presumed, But in this strain I answered: "Tell me now What treasures from Saint Peter at the first Our Lord demanded, when he put the keys

Into his charge? Surely he asked no more
But 'follow me!' Nor Peter, nor the rest,
Or gold or silver of Matthias took,
When lots were cast upon the forfeit place
Of the condemned soul. Abide thou then:
Thy punishment of right is merited:
And look thou well to that ill-gotten coin,
Which against Charles thy hardihood inspired.
If reverence of the keys restrained me not,
Which thou in happier time didst hold, I yet
Severer speech might use. Your avarice
O'ercasts the world with mourning, under
foot

Treading the good, and raising bad men up.
Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist
Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
With kings in filthy whoredom he upheld;
She who with seven heads towered at her
birth,

And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
Differing wherein from the idolater,
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?
Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,
Which the first wealthy Father gained from
thee."

Meanwhile, as thus I sung, he, whether wrath
Or conscience smote him violent upsprang
Spinning on either sole. I do believe
My teacher well was pleased, with so composed
A lip he listened ever to the sound
Of the true words I uttered. In both arms
He caught, and, to his bosom lifting me,

Upward retraced the way of his descent.

Nor weary of his weight, he pressed me close,
Till to the summit of the rock we came,
Our passage from the fourth to the fifth pier.
His cherished burden there gently he placed
Upon the rugged rock and steep, a path
Not easy for the clambering goat to mount.
Thence to my view another vale appeared.

CANTO XX.

And now the verse proceeds to torments new,
Fit argument of this the twentieth strain
Of the first song, whose awful theme records
The spirits whelmed in woe. Earnest I looked
Into the depth, that opened to my view,
Moistened with tears of anguish, and beheld
A tribe, that came along the hollow vale,
In silence weeping: such their step as walk
Quires, chanting solemn litanies, on earth.

As on them more direct mine eye descends,
Each wonderously seemed to be reversed
At the neck-bone, so that the countenance
Was from the reins averted; and because
None might before him look, they were compelled

To advance with backward gait. Thus one
perhaps

Hath seen by force of palsy clean transposed,
But I ne'er saw it nor believe it so.

Now, reader! think within thyself, so God
Fruit of thy reading give thee! how I long
Could keep my visage dry, when I beheld

Near me our form distorted in such guise,
That on the hinder parts fallen from the face
The tears down-streaming rolled. Against a
rock

I leant and wept, so that my guide exclaimed:
"What, and are thou, too, witless as the rest?
Here pity most doth show herself alive,
When she is dead. What guilt exceedeth his,
Who with Heaven's judgment in his passion
strives?

Raise up thy head, raise up, and see the man
Before whose eyes earth gaped in Thebes, when
all

Cried out 'Amphiaraus, whither rushest?
Why leavest thou the war?' He not the less
Fell ruining far as to Minos down,
Whose grapple none eludes. Lo! how he makes
The breast his shoulders; and who once too far
Before him wished to see, now backward looks,
And treads reverse his path. Tiresias note,
Who semblance changed, when woman he be-
came

Of male, through every limb transformed; and
then

Once more behoved him with his rod to strike
The two entwining serpents, ere the plumes,
That marked the better sex, might shoot again.

"Aruns, with rere his belly facing, comes,
On Luni's mountains, midst the marbles white,
Where delves Carrara's hind, who wones be-
neath,

A cavern was his dwelling, whence the stars
And main-sea wide in boundless view he held.

"The next, whose loosened tresses overspread
Her bosom, which thou seest not (for each hair

On that side grows) was Manto, she who
searched

Through many regions, and at length her seat
Fixed in my native land: whence a short space
My words detain thy audience. When her sire
From life departed, and in servitude
The city dedicate to Bacchus mourned,
Long time she went a wanderer through the
world.

Aloft in Italy's delightful land
A lake there lies, at foot of that proud Alp
That o'er the Tyrol locks Germania in,
Its name Benacus, from whose ample breast
A thousand springs, methinks, and more be-
tween

Camonica and Garda, issuing forth,
Water the Apennine. There is a spot
At midway of that lake, where he who bears
Of Trento's flock the pastoral staff, with him
Of Brescia, and the Veronese, might each
Passing that way his benediction give.
A garrison of goodly site and strong
Peschiera stands, to awe with front opposed
The Bergamese and Brescian, whence the shore
More slope each way descends. There, what-
soe'er

Benacus' bosom holds out, tumbling o'er
Down falls, and winds a river flood beneath
Through the green pastures. Soon as in his
course

The stream makes head, Benacus then no more
They call the name, but Minicus, till at last
Reaching Governo, into Po he falls.

Not far his course hath run, when a wide flat
It finds, which overstretching as a marsh

It covers, pestilent in summer oft.
Hence journeying, the savage maiden saw
Midst of the fen a territory waste
And naked of inhabitants. To shun
All human converse, here she with her slaves,
Plying her arts, remained, and lived, and left
Her body tenantless. Thenceforth the tribes,
Who round were scattered, gathering to that
place,

Assembled; for its strength was great, enclosed
On all parts by the fen. On those dead bones
They reared themselves a city, for her sake
Calling it Mantua, who first chose the spot,
Nor asked another omen for the name;
Wherein more numerous the people dwelt,
Ere Casalodi's madness by deceit
Was wronged of Pinamonte. If thou hear
Henceforth another origin assigned
Of that my country, I forewarn thee now,
That falsehood none beguile thee of the truth."
I answered, "Teacher, I conclude thy words
So certain, that all else shall be to me
As embers lacking life. But now of these,
Who here proceed, instruct me, if thou see
Any that merit more especial note.
For thereon is my mind alone intent."

He straight replied: "That spirit, from whose
cheek

The beard sweeps o'er his shoulders brown,
what time

Græcia was emptied of her males, that scarce
The cradles were supplied, the seer was he
In Aulis, who with Calchas gave the sign
When first to cut the cable. Him they named
Eurypilus: so sings my tragic strain.

In which majestic measure well thou know'st,
Who know'st it all. That other, round the
loins

So slender of his shape, was Michael Scot,
Practised in every slight of magic wile.

"Guido Bonatti see: Asdente mark,
Who now were willing he had tended still
The thread and cordwain, and too late repents.

"See next the wretches, who the needle left,
The shuttle and the spindle, and became
Diviners: baneful witcheries they wrought
With images and herbs. But onward now:
For now doth Cain with fork of thorns confine
On either hemisphere, touching the wave
Beneath the towers of Seville. Yesternight
The moon was round. Thou mayst remember
well:

For she good service did thee in the gloom
Of the deep wood." This said, both onward
moved.

CANTO XXI.

Thus we from bridge to bridge, with other talk,
The which my drama cares not be rehearse,
Passed on; and to the summit reaching, stood
To view another gap, within the round
Of Malebolge, other bootless pangs,

Marvellous darkness shadowed o'er the place.

In the Venetians' arsenal as boils
Through wintry months tenacious pitch, to
smear

Their unsound vessels; for the inclement time

Sea-faring men restrains, and in that while
His bark one builds anew, another stops
The ribs of his that hath made many a voyage,
One hammers at the prow, one at the poop,
This shapeth oars, that other cables twirls,
The mizen one repairs, and main-sail rent;
So, not by force of fire but art divine,
Boiled here a glutinous thick mass, that round
Lined all the shore beneath. I that beheld,
But therein nought distinguished, save the
bubbles

Raised by the boiling, and one mighty swell
Heave, and by turns subsiding fall. While
there

I fixed my ken below, "Mark! mark!" my
guide

Exclaiming, drew me towards him from the
place

Wherein I stood. I turned myself, as one
Impatient to behold that which beheld
He needs must shun, whom sudden fear un-
mans,

That he his flight delays not for the view,
Behind me I discerned a devil black.

That running up advanced along the rock.

Ah! what fierce cruelty his look bespake.

In act how bitter did he seem, with wings
Buoyant outstretched and feet of nimblest
tread.

His shoulder, proudly eminent and sharp,
Was with a sinner charged; by either haunch
He held him, the foot's sinew gripping fast.

"Ye of our bridge!" he cried, "keen-taloned
fiends!

Lo! one of Santa Zita's elders. Him

Whelm ye beneath, while I return for more.
That land hath store of such. All men are
there,

Except Bonturo, barterers: of 'no'
For lucre there an 'ay' is quickly made."

Him dashing down, o'er the rough rock he
turned;

Nor ever after thief a mastiff loosed
Sped with like eager haste. That other sank,
And forthwith writhing to the surface rose.
But those dark demons, shrouded by the bridge,
Cried, "Here the hallowed visage saves not:
here

Is other swimming than in Serchio's wave,
Wherefore, if thou desire we rend thee not,
Take heed thou mount not o'er the pitch."

This said,

They grappled him with more than hundred
hooks,

And shouted: "Covered thou must sport thee
here;

So, if thou canst, in secret thou mayst filch."
E'en thus the cook bestirs him, with his grooms,
To thrust the flesh into the caldron down
With flesh-hooks, that it float not on the top.

Me then my guide bespake: "Lest they
descry

That thou art here, behind a craggy rock
Bend low and screen thee: and whate'er of
force

Be offered me, or insult, fear thou not;
For I am well advised, who have been erst
In the like fray." Beyond the bridge's head
Therewith he passed; and reaching the sixth
pier,

Behoved him then a forehead terror-proof.

With storm and fury, as when dogs rush
forth

Upon the poor man's back, who suddenly
From whence he standeth makes his suit; so
rushed

Those from beneath the arch, and against him
Their weapons all they pointed. He, aloud:
"Be none of you outrageous: ere your time
Dare seize me, come forth from amongst you
one,

Who having heard my words, decide he then
If he shall tear these limbs." They shouted
loud,

"Go, Malacoda!" Whereat one advanced,
The others standing firm, and as he came,
"What may this turn avail him?" he ex-
claimed.

"Believest thou, Malacoda! I had come
Thus far from all your skirmishing secure,"
My teacher answered, "without will divine
And destiny propitious? Pass we then;
For so Heaven's pleasure is, that I should lead
Forthwith so fell his pride, that he let drop
The instrument of torture at his feet,
And to the rest exclaimed: "We have no power
To strike him." Then to me my guide: "O
thou!

Who on the bridge among the crags dost sit
Low crouching, safely now to me return."

I rose, and towards him moved with speed;
the fiends

Meantime all forward drew: me terror seized,

Lest they should break the compact they had made.

Thus issuing from Caprona, once I saw
The infantry, dreading lest his covenant
The foe should break; so close he hemmed
them round.

I to my leader's side adhered, mine eyes
With fixt and motionless observance bent
On their unkindly visage. They their hooks
Protruding, one the other thus bespake:

"Wilt thou I touch him on the hip?" To whom
Was answered: "Even so, nor miss thy aim."

But he, who was in conference with my
guide,
Turned rapid round; and thus the demon
spake:

"Stay, stay thee, Scarmiglione!" Then to us
He added: "Further footing to your step
This rock affords not, shivered to the base
Of the sixth arch. But would ye still proceed,
Up by this cavern go: not distant far,
Another rock will yield you passage safe.
Yesterday, later by five hours than now,
Twelve hundred threescore years and six had
filled

The circuit of their course, since here the way
Was broken. Thitherward I straight dispatch
Certain of these my scouts, who shall espy
If any on the surface bask. With them
Go ye: for ye shall find them nothing fell.
Come, Alichino, forth," with that he cried,
"And Calcabrina, and Cagnazzo thou!
The troop of ten let Barbariccia lead.
With Libicocco, Draghinazzo haste,
Fanged Ciriatto, Graffiacane fierce,

And Farfarello, and mad Rubicant,
Search ye around the bubbling tar. For these,
In safety lead them, where the other crag
Uninterrupted traverses the dens."

I then: "O master! what a sight is there.
Ah! without escort, journey we alone,
Which, if thou know the way, I covet not.
Unless thy prudence fail thee, dost not mark,
How they do gnarl upon us, and their scowl
Threatens us present tortures?" He replied:
"I charge thee, fear not: let them, as they will,
Gnarl on: 'tis but a token of their spite
Against the souls who mourn in torment
steeped."

To leftward o'er the pier they turned; but each
Had first between his teeth prest close the
tongue,
Toward their leader for a signal looking,
Which he with sound obscene triumphant gave.

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Virgil and Dante proceed, accompanied by the Demons, and see other sinners of the same description in the same gulf. The device of Ciampolc, one of these, to escape from the Demons, who had laid hold on him.

It hath been heretofore my chance to see
Horsemen with martial order shifting camp,
To onset sallying, or in muster ranged,
Or in retreat sometimes outstretched for flight:
Light-armed squadrons and fleet foragers

Scouring thy plains, Arezzo! have I seen,
And clashing tournaments, and tilting jousts,
Now with the sound of trumpets, now of bells,
Tabors, or signals made from castled heights,
And with inventions multiform, our own,
Or introduced from foreign land; but ne'er
To such a strange recorder I beheld,
In evolution moving, horse nor foot,
Nor ship, that tacked by sign from land or star,
With the ten demons on our way we went;
Ah, fearful company! but in the church
With saints, with gluttons at the tavern's
mess.

Still earnest on the pitch I gazed, to mark
All things whate'er the chasm contained, and
those
Who burned within. As dolphins that, in sign
To mariners, heave high their arched backs,
That thence forewarned they may advise to
save
Their threatened vessel: so, at intervals,
To ease the pain, his back some sinner showed,
Then hid more nimbly than the lightning-
glance.

E'en as the frogs, that of a watery moat
Stand at the brink, with the jaws only out,
Their feet and of the trunk all else concealed,
Thus on each part the sinners stood; but soon
As Barbariccia was at hand, so they
Drew back under the wave. I saw, and yet
My heart doth stagger, one, that waited thus,
As it befalls that oft one frog remains,
While the next springs away: and Graffiacan,
Who of the fiends was nearest, grappling seized

His clotted locks, and dragged him sprawling
up,

That he appeared to me an otter. Each
Already by their names I knew, so well
When they were chosen I observed, and marked
How one the other called. "O Rubicant!
See that his hide thou with they talons flay,"
Shouted together all the cursed crew.

Then I: "Inform thee, Master! if thou may,
What wretched soul is this, on whom their
hands

His foes have laid." My leader to his side
Approached, and whence he came inquired; to
whom

Was answered thus: "Born in Navarre's do-
main,

My mother placed me in a lord's retinue;
For she had borne me to a losel vile,
A spendthrift of his substance and himself.
The good king Thibault after that I served:
To peculating here my thoughts were turned,
Whereof I give account in this dire heat."

Straight Ciriatto, from whose mouth a tusk
Issued on either side, as from a boar,
Ripped him with one of these. 'Twixt evil
claws

The mouse had fallen: but Barbariccia cried,
Seizing him with both arms: "Stand thou
apart

While I do fix him on my prong transpierced."
Then added, turning to my guide his face,
"Inquire of him, if more thou wish to learn,
Ere he again be rent." My leader thus:
"Then tell us of the partners in thy guilt;
Knowest thou any sprung of Latan land

Under the tar?"—"I parted," he replied,
"But now from one, who sojourned not far
thence;

So were I under shelter now with him,
Nor hook nor talon than should scare me more."

"Too long we suffer," Libicocco cried;
Then, darting forth a prong, seized on his arm,
And mangled bore away the sinewy part.
Him Draghinazzo by his thighs beneath
Would next have caught; whence angrily their
chief,

Turning on all sides round, with threatening
brow

Restrained them. When their strife a little
ceased,

Of him, who yet was gazing on his wound,

My teacher thus without delay inquired:

"Who was the spirit, from whom by evil hap
Parting, as thou hast told, thou camest to
shore?"—

"It was the friar Gomita," he rejoined,

"He of Gallura, vessel of all guile,

Who had his master's enemies in hand,

And used them so that they commend him
well.

Money he took, and them at large dismissed;

So he reports; and in each other charge

Committed to his keeping played the part

Of barterer to the height. With him doth
herd

The chief of Logodoro, Michel Zanche.

Sardinia is a theme whereof their tongue

Is never weary. Out! alas! behold

That other, how he grins. More would I say,

But tremble lest he mean to maul me sore."

Their captain then to Farfarello turning,
Who rolled his moony eyes in act to strike,
Rebuked him thus: "Off, cursed bird! avaunt!"

"If ye desire to see or hear," he thus
Quaking with dread resumed, "or Tuscan
spirits

Or Lombard, I will cause them to appear.
Meantime let these ill talons bate their fury,
So that no vengeance they may fear from them,
And I, remaining in this self-same place,
Will, for myself but one, make seven appear,
When my shrill whistle shall be heard: for so
Our custom is to call each other up."

Cagnazzo at that word deriding grinned,
Then wagged the head and spake: "Hear his
device,

Mischievous as he is, to plunge him down."

Whereto he thus, who failed not in rich store
Of nice-wove toils: "Mischief, forsooth, ex-
treme!

Meant only to procure myself more woe."

No longer Alichino then refrained,
But thus, the rest gainsaying, him bespake:
"If thou do cast thee down, I not on foot
Will chase thee, but above the pitch will beat
My plumes. Quit we the vantage ground, and
let

The bank be as a shield; that we may see,
If singly thou prevail against us all."

Now, reader, of new sport expect to hear.

They each one turned his eyes to the other
shore.

He first, who was the hardest to persuade.

The spirit of Navarre chose well his time,
Planted his feet on land, and at one leap

Escaping, disappointed their resolve.

Them quick resentment stung, but him the
most

Who was the cause of failure: in pursuit

He therefore sped, exclaiming, "Thou art
caught."

But little it availed; terror outstripped
His following flight; the other plunged be-
neath,

And he with upward pinion raised his breast:
E'en thus the water-fowl, when she perceives
The falcon near, dives, instant down, while he
Enraged and spent retires. That mockery
In Calcebrina fury stirred, who flew

After him, with desire of strife inflamed;
And, for the barterer had 'scaped, so turned
His talons on his comrade. O'er the dike

In grapple close they joined; but the other
proved

A goshawk able to read well his foe;
And in the boiling lake both fell. The heat
Was umpire soon between them; but in vain
To lift themselves they strove, so fast were
glued

Their pennons. Barbariccia, as the rest,
That chance lamenting, four in flight des-
patched

From the other coast, with all their weapons
armed.

They, to their post on each side speedily
Descending, stretched their hooks toward the
fiends,

Who floundered, inly burning from their scars:
And we departing left them to that broil.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The enraged Demons pursue Dante, but he is preserved from them by Virgil. On reaching the sixth gulf, he beholds the punishment of the hypocrites; which is, to pace continually round the gulf under the pressure of caps and hoods, that are gilt on the outside, but leaden within. He is addressed by two of these, Catalano and Loderingo, knights of Saint Mary, otherwise called Joyous Friars and Bologna. Caiaphas is seen fixed to a cross on the ground, and lies so stretched along the way, that all tread on him in passing.

In silence and in solitude we went,
One first, the other following his steps,
As minor friars journeying on their road.

The present fray had turned my thoughts to
 muse

Upon old Aesop's fable, where he told
What fate unto the mouse and frog befell;
For language hath not sounds more like in
 sense,

Than are these chances, if the origin
And end of each be heedfully compared.
And as one thought bursts from another froth,
So afterward from that another sprang,
Which added doubly to my former fear.
For thus I reasoned: "These through us have
 been

So foiled, with loss and mockery so complete,

As needs must sting them sore. If anger then
Be to their evil will conjoined, more fell
They shall pursue us, than the savage hound
Snatches the leveret panting 'twixt his jaws."

Already I perceived my hair stand all
On end with terror, and looked eager back.

"Teacher," I thus began, "if speedily
Thyself and me thou hide not, much I dread
Those evil talons. Even now behind
They urge us: quick imagination works
So forcibly, that I already feel them."

He answered: "Were I formed of leaded
glass,
I should not sooner draw unto myself
Thy outward image, than I now imprint
That from within. This moment came thy
thoughts

Presented before mine, with similar act
And countenance similar, so that from both
I one design have framed. If the right coast
Incline so much, that we may thence descend
Into the other chasm, we shall escape
Secure from this imagined pursuit."

He had not spoke his purpose to the end,
When I from far beheld them with spread
wings

Approach to take us. Suddenly my guide
Caught me, even as a mother that from sleep
Is by the noise aroused, and near her sees
The climbing fires, who snatches up her babe
And flies ne'er pausing, careful more of him
Than of herself, that but a single vest
Clings round her limbs. Down from the jut-
ting beach

Supine he cast him to that pendent rock,

Which closes on one part the other chasm.

Never ran water with such hurrying pace
Adown the tube to turn a land-mills' wheel,
When nearest it approaches to the spokes,
As then along that edge my master ran,
Carrying me in his bosom, as a child,
Not a companion. Scarcely had his feet
Reached the lowest of the bed beneath,
When over us the steep they reached: but fear
In him was none; for that high Providence,
Which placed them ministers of the fifth foss,
Power of departing thence took from them all.

There in the depth we saw a painted tribe,
Who paced with tardy steps around, and wept,
Faint in appearance and o'ercome with toil.
Caps had they on, with hoods, that fell low
down

Before their eyes, in fashion like to those
Worn by the monks in Cologne. Their outside
Was overlaid with gold, dazzling to view,
But leaden all within, and of such weight,
That Frederick's compared to these were straw.
Oh, everlasting wearisome attire!

We yet once more with them together turned
To leftward, on their dismal moan intent.
But by the weight opprest, so slowly came
The fainting people, that our company
Was changed, at every movement of the step.

Whence I my guide addressed: "See that
thou find
Some spirit, whose name may by his deeds be
known;

And to that end look round thee as thou go'st."

Then one, who understood the Tuscan voice,
Cried after us aloud: "Hold in your feet,

• Ye who so swiftly speed through the dusk air.
Perchance from me thou shalt obtain thy wish."

Whereat my leader, turning, me bespake:
"Pause, and then onward at their pace proceed."

I stayed, and saw two spirits in whose look
Impatient eagerness of mind was marked
To overtake me; but the load they bare
And narrow path retarded their approach.

Soon as arrived, they with an eye askance
Purused me, but spake not: then turning, each
To other thus conferring said: "This one
Seems, by the action of his throat, alive;
And, be they dead, what privilege allows
They walk unmantled by the cumbrous stole?"

Then thus to me: "Tuscan, who visitest
The college of the mourning hypocrites,
Disdain not to instruct us who thou art."

"By Arno's pleasant stream," I thus replied,
"In the great city I was bred and grew,
And wear the body I have even worn.
But who are ye, from whom such mighty grief,
As now I witness, courseth down your cheeks?
What torment breaks forth in this bitter woe?"

"Our bonnets gleaming bright with orange
hue,"

One of them answered, "are so leaden gross.
That with their weight they make the balances
To crack beneath them. Joyous friars we were,
Bologna's natives; Catalano I,
He Loderingo named; and by thy land
Together taken, as men use to take
A single and indifferent arbiter,
To reconcile their strifes. How there we sped,
Gardingo's vicinage can best declare."

"O friars!" I began, "your miseries—" But there brake off, for one had caught mine eye,
Fixed to a cross with three stakes on the ground:
He, when he saw me, writhed himself, throughout
Distorted, ruffling with deep sighs his beard.
And Catalano, who thereof was 'ware,
Thus spake: "That pierced spirit, whom intent
Thou view'st, was he who gave the Pharisees
Counsel, that it were fitting for one man
To suffer for the people. He doth lie
Transverse; nor any passes, but him first
Behoves make feeling trial how each weighs.
In straits like this along the foss are placed
The father of his consort, and the rest
Partakers in that council, seed of ill
And sorrow to the Jews." I noted then,
How Virgil gazed with wonder upon him,
Thus abjectly extended on the cross
In banishment eternal. To the friar
He next his words addressed: "We pray ye
tell,
If so be lawful, whether on our right
Lies any opening in the rock, whereby
We both may issue hence, without constraint
On the dark angels, that compelled they come
To lead us from this depth." He thus replied:
"Nearer than thou dost hope, there is a rock
From the great circle moving, which o'ersteps
Each vale of horror, save that here his cope
Is shattered. By the ruin ye may mount:
For on the side it slants, and most the height
Rises below." With head bent down awhile

My leader stood; then spake: "He warned us
ill,

Who yonder hangs the sinners on his hook."

To whom the friar: "At Bologna erst
I many vices of the devil heard;

Among the rest was said, 'He is a liar,
And the father of lies!'" When he had spoke,
My leader with large strides proceeded on,
Somewhat disturbed with anger in his look.

I therefore left the spirits heavy laden,
And, following, his beloved footsteps marked.

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Under the escort of his faithful master, Dante not without difficulty makes his way out of the sixth gulf; and in the seventh, sees the robbers tormented by venomous and pestilent serpents. The soul of Vanni Fucci, who had pillaged the sacristy of Saint James in Pistoia, predicts some calamities that impended over that city, and over the Florentines.

In the year's early nonage, when the sun
Tempers his tresses in Aquarius' urn,
And now towards equal day the nights recede;
When as the rime upon the earth puts on
Her dazzling sister's image, but not long
Her milder sway endures; then riseth up
The village hind, whom fails his wintry store,
And looking out beholds the plain around
All whitened; whence impatiently he smites
His thighs, and to his hut returning in,

There paces to and fro, wailing his lot,
As a discomfited and helpless man;
Then comes he forth again, and feels new
hope

Spring in his bosom, finding e'en thus soon
The world hath changed its countenance, grasps
his crook,

And forth to pasture drives his little flock:
So me my guide disheartened, when I saw
His troubled forehead; and so speedily
That ill was cured; for at the fallen bridge
Arriving, towards me with a look as sweet,
He turned him back, as that I first beheld
At the steep mountain's foot. Regarding well
The ruin, and some counsel first maintained
With his own thought, he opened wide his arm
And took me up. As one, who, while he works,
Computes his labor's issue, that he seems
Still to foeseer the effect; so lifting me
Up to the summit of one peak, he fixed
His eye upon another. "Grapple that,"
Said he, "but first make proof, if it be such
As will sustain thee." For one capt with lead
This were no journey. Scarcely he, though
light,

And I, though onward pushed from crag to
crag,

Could mount. And if the precinct of this coast
Were not less ample than the last, for him
I know not, but my strength had surely failed.
But Malebolge all toward the mouth
Inclining of the nethermost abyss,
The site of every valley hence requires,
That one side upward slope, the other fall.

At length the point from whence the utmost
stone

Juts down, we reached; soon as to that arrived,
So was the breath exhausted from my lungs
I could no further, but did seat me there.

"Now needs thy best of man;" so spake my
guide:

"For not on downy plumes, nor under shade
Of canopy reposing, fame is won;

Without which whosoe'er consumes his days,
Leaveth such vestige of himself on earth,
As smoke in air or foam upon the wave.

Thou therefore rise: vanquish thy weariness
By the mind's effort, in each struggle formed
To vanquish, if she suffer not the weight
Of her corporeal frame to crush her down.

A longer ladder yet remains to scale.

From these to have escaped sufficeth not.

If well thou note me, profit by my words."

I straightway rose, and showed myself less
spent

Than I in truth did feel me. "On," I cried,
"For I am stout and fearless." Up the rock
Our way we held, more rugged than before,
Narrower, and steeper far to climb. From talk
I ceased not, as we journeyed, so to seem
Least faint; whereat a voice from the other
foss

Did issue forth, for utterance suited ill.

Though on the arch that crosses there I stood,
What were the words I knew not, but who
spake

Seemed moved in anger. Down I stooped to
look;

But my quick eye might reach not to the depth

For shrouding darkness; wherefore thus I
spake:

"To the next circle, teacher, bend thy steps,
And from the wall dismount we; for as hence
I hear and understand not, so I see
Beneath, and naught discern."—"I answer not,"
Said he, "but by the deed. To fair request
Silent performance maketh best return."

We from the bridge's head descended, where
To the eighth mound it joins; and then, the
chasm

Opening to view, I saw a crowd within
Of serpents terrible, so strange of shape
And hideous, that remembrance in my veins
Yet shrinks the vital current. Of her sands
Let Libya vaunt no more: if Jaculus,
Pareas and Chelyder be her brood,
Cenchris and Amphisbœna, plagues so dire
Or in such numbers swarming ne'er she
showed,

Not with all Ethiopia, and whate'er
Above the Erythræan sea is spawned.

Amid this dread exuberance of woe
Ran naked spirits winked with horrid fear,
Nor hope had they of crevice where to hide,
Or heliotrope to charm them out of view.
With serpents were their hands behind them
bound,

Which through their reins infixed the tail and
head

Twisted in folds before. And lo! on one
Near to our side, darted an adder up,
And, where the neck is on the shoulders tied,

Transpierced him. Far more quickly than
e'er pen

Wrote O or I, he kindled, burned, and changed
To ashes all, poured out upon the earth.

When there dissolved he lay, the dust again
Uprolled spontaneous, and the self-same form
Instant resumed. So mighty sages tell,
The Arabian Phoenix, when five hundred years
Have well nigh circled, dies, and springs forth-
with

Renascent: blade nor herb throughout his life
He tastes, but tears of frankincense alone
And odorous amomum: swaths of nard
And myrrh his funeral shroud. As one that
falls,

He knows not how, by force demoniac dragged
To earth, or through obstruction fettering up
In chains invisible the powers of man,
Who, risen from his trance, gazeth around,
Bewildered with the monstrous agony
He hath endured, and wildly staring sighs;
So stood aghast the sinner when he rose.

Oh! how severe God's judgment, that deals
out

Such blows in stormy vengeance. Who he was,
My teacher next inquired; and thus in few
He answered: "Vanni Fucci am I called,
Not long since rained down from Tuscany
To this dire gullet. Me the bestial life
And not the human pleased, mule that I was,
Who in Pistoia found my worthy den."

I then to Virgil: "Bid him stir not hence;
And ask what crime did thrust him hither:
once

A man I knew him, choleric and bloody."

The sinner heard and feigned not, but towards me

His mind directing and his face, wherein
Was dismal shame depicted, thus he spake:
"It grieves me more to have been caught by
thee

In this sad plight, which thou beholdest, than
When I was taken from the other life.

I have no power permitted to deny
What thou inquirest. I am doomed thus low
To dwell, for that the sacristy by me
Was rifled of its goodly ornaments,
And with the guilt another falsely charged.
But that thou mayst not joy to see me thus,
So as thou e'er shalt 'scape this darksome
realm

Open thine ears and hear what I forebode.
Reft of the Neri first Pistoia pines;
Then Florence changeth citizens and laws;
From Valdimagra, drawn by wrathful Mars,
A vapor rises, wrapt in turbid mists,
And sharp and eager driveth on the storm
With arrowy hurtling o'er Piceno's field,
Whence suddenly the cloud shall burst, and
strike

Each helpless Bianco prostrate to the ground.
This have I told, that grief may rend thy
heart."

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

The sacrilegious Fucci vents his fury in blasphemy, is seized by serpents, and flying is pursued by Cacus in the form of a Centaur, who is

described with a swarm of serpents on his haunch, and a dragon on his shoulders breathing forth fire. Our Poet then meets with the spirits of three of his countrymen, two of whom undergo marvellous transformation in his presence.

When he had spoke, the sinner raised his hands

Pointed in mockery, and cried: "Take them, God!

I level them at thee." From that day forth
The serpents were my friends; for round his neck

One of them rolling twisted, as it said,
"Be silent, tongue!" Another, to his arms
Upgliding tied them riveting itself
So close it took from them the power to move.

Pistoia! ah, Pistoia! why dost doubt
To turn thee into ashes, cumbering earth
No longer, since in evil act so far
Thou hast outdone thy seed? I did not mark,
Through all the gloomy circles of the abyss,
Spirit, that swelled so proudly 'gainst his
God;

Not him, who headlong fell from Thebes. He fled,

Nor uttered more; and after him there came
A centaur full of fury, shouting, "Where,
Where is the caitiff?" On Maremma's marsh
Swarm not the serpent tribe, as on his haunch
They swarmed, to where the human face begins.

Behind his head, upon the shoulders, lay
With open wings a dragon, breathing fire
On whomsoe'er he met. To me my guide:

"Cacus is this, who underneath the rock
Of Aventine spread oft a lake of blood.
He, from his brethren parted, here must tread
A different journey, for his fraudulent theft
Of the great herd that near him stalled;
whence found

His felon deeds their end, beneath the mace
Of stout Alcides, that perchance laid on
A hundred blows, and not the tenth was felt."

While yet he spake, the centaur sped away:
And under us three spirits came, of whom
Nor I nor he was ware, till they exclaimed,
"Say who are ye!" We then brake off dis-
course,

Intent on these alone. I knew them not:
But, as it chanceth oft, befell, that one
Had need to name another. "Where," said he,
"Doth Cianfa lurk?" I, for a sign my guide
Should stand attentive, placed against my lips
The finger lifted. If, O reader! now
Thou be not apt to credit what I tell,
No marvel; for myself do scarce allow
The witness of mine eyes. But as I looked
Toward them, lo! a serpent with six feet
Springs forth on one, and fastens full upon
him:

His midmost grasped the belly, a forefoot
Seized on each arm (while deep in either
check

He fleshed his fangs); the hinder on the thighs
Were spread, 'twixt which the tail inserted
curled

Upon the reins behind. Ivy ne'er clasped
A doddered oak, as round the other's limbs

The hideous monster intertwined his own.
Then, as they both had been of burning wax,
Each melted into other, mingling hues,
That which was either now was seen no more.
Thus up the shrinking paper, ere it burns,
A brown tint glides, not turning yet to black,
And the clean white expires. The other two
Looked on, exclaiming, "Ah! how dost thou
change,

Agnello! See? Thou art nor double now,
Nor only one." The two heads now became
One, and two figures blended in one form
Appeared, where both were lost. Of the four
lengths

Two arms were made: the belly and the chest,
The thighs and legs, into such members
changed

As never eye hath seen. Of former shape
All trace was vanished. Two, yet neither
seemed

That image miscreate, and so passed on
With tardy steps. As underneath the scourge
Of the fierce dog-star that lays bare the fields,
Shifting from brake to brake the lizard seems
A flash of lightning, if he thwart the road;
So toward the entrails of the other two
Approaching seemed an adder all on fire,
As the dark pepper-grain livid and swart.
In that part, whence our life is nourished first,
One he transpierced; then down before him
fell

Stretched out. The pierced spirit looked on
him,

But spake not; yea, stood motionless and
yawned,

As if by sleep or feverous fit assailed.
He eyed the serpent, and the serpent him.
One from the wound, the other from the mouth
Breathed a thick smoke, whose vapory columns
joined.

Lucan in mute attention now may hear,
Nor thy disastrous fate, Sabellus, tell,
Nor thine, Nasidius. Ovid now be mute.
What if in warbling fiction he record
Cadmus and Arethusa, to a snake
Him changed, and her into a fountain clear,
I envy not; for never face to face
Two natures thus transmuted did he sing,
Wherein both shapes were ready to assume
The other's substance. They in mutual guise
So answered, that the serpent split his train
Divided to a fork, and the pierced spirit
Drew close his steps together, legs and thighs
Compacted, that no sign of juncture soon
Was visible: the tail, disparted, took
The figure which the spirit lost; its skin
Softening, his indurated to a rind.
The shoulders next I marked, that entering
joined
The monster's arm-pits, whose two shorter
feet
So lengthened, as the others dwindling shrunk.
The feet behind then twisting up became
That part that man conceals, which in the
wretch
Was cleft in twain. While both the shadowy
smoke
With a new color veils, and generates
The excrescent pile on one, peeling it off
From the other body, lo! upon his feet

One upright rose, and prone the other fell.
Nor yet their glaring and malignant lamps
Were shifted, though each feature changed
beneath.

Of him who stood erect, the mounting face
Retreated towards the temples, and what there
Superfluous matter came, shot out in ears
From the smooth cheeks; the rest, not back-
ward dragged,

Of its excess did shape the nose; and swelled
Into due size protuberant the lips.

He, on the earth who lay, meanwhile extends
His sharpened visage, and draws down the ears
Into the head, as doth the slug his horns.

His tongue, continuous before and apt
For utterance, severs; and the other's fork
Closing unites. That done, the smoke was
laid.

The soul, transformed into the brute, glides off,
Hissing along the vale, and after him
The other talking sputters; but soon turned
His new-grown shoulders on him and in few
Thus to another spake: "Along this path
Crawling, as I have done, speed Buoso now!"

So saw I fluctuate in successive change
The unsteady ballast of the seventh hold:
And here if aught my pen have swerved, events
So strange may be its warrant. O'er mine
eyes

Confusion hung, and on my thoughts amaze.

Yet scaped they not so covertly, but well
I marked Sciancato: he alone it was
Of the three first that came, who changed not:
tho'

The other's fate, Gaville! still dost rue.

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Remounting by the steps, down which they had descended to the seventh gulf, they go forward to the arch that stretches over the eighth, and from thence behold numberless ames wherein are punished the evil counsellors, each ame containing a sinner, save one, in which were Diomede and Ulysses, the latter of whom relates the manner of his death.

FLORENCE, exult! for thou so mightily
Hast thriven, that o'er land and sea thy wings
Thou beatest, and thy name spreads over hell.
Among the plunderers, such the three I found
Thy citizens; whence shame to me thy son,
And no proud honor to thyself redounds.

But if our minds, when dreaming near the
dawn,
Are of the truth presageful, thou ere long
Shalt feel what Prato (not to say the rest)
Would fain might come upon thee; and that
chance

Were in good time, if it befell thee now.
Would so it were, since it must needs befall!
For as time wears me, I shall grieve the more.

We from the depth departed; and my guide
Remounting scaled the flinty steps, which late
Among the crags and splinters of the rock,
Sped not our feet without the help of hands.

Then sorrow seized me, which e'en now re-
vives.

As my thought turns again to what I saw,
And, more than I am wont, I rein and curb
The powers of nature in me, lest they run
Where Virtue guides not; that, if aught of good
My gentle star or something better gave me,
I envy not myself the precious boon.

As in that season, when the sun least veils
His face that lightens all, what time the fly
Gives way to the shrill gnat, the peasant then
Upon some cliff reclined, beneath him sees
Fire-flies innumerable spangling o'er the vale,
Vineyard or tilth, where his day-labor lies;
With flames so numberless throughout its
space

Shone the eighth chasm, apparent, when the
depth

Was to my view exposed. As he, whose wrongs
The bears avenged, at its departure saw
Elijah's chariot, when the steeds erect
Raised their steep flight for heaven; his eyes,
meanwhile,

Straining pursued them, till the flame alone,
Upsoaring like a misty spect, he kenned:
E'en thus along the gulf moves every flame,
A sinner so enfolded close in each,
That none exhibits token of the theft.

Upon the bridge I forward bent to look,
And grasped a flinty mass, or else had fallen,
Though pushed not from the height. The
guide, who marked

How I did gaze attentive, thus began:

"Within these ardors are the spirits, each
Swathed in confining fires."—"Master! thy
word,"

I answered, "hath assured me; yet I deemed
Already of the truth, already wished
To ask thee who is in yon fire, that comes
So parted at the summit, as it seemed
Ascending from that funeral pile where lay
The Theban brothers." He replied: "Within,
Ulysses there and Diomedes endure
Their penal tortures, thus to vengeance now
Together hasting, as erewhile to wrath.
These in the flames with ceaseless groans de-
plore

The ambush of the horse, that opened wide
A portal for that goodly seed to pass,
Which sowed imperial Rome; nor less the
guile

Lament they, whence, of her Achilles 'reft,
Deidamia yet in death complains.
And there is rued the stratagem that Troy
Of her Palladium spoiled."—"If they have
power

Of utterance from within these sparks," said I,
"O master! think my prayer a thousand-fold
In repetition urged, that thou vouchsafe
To pause till here the horned flame arrive.
See, how toward it with desire I bend."

He thus: "Thy prayer is worthy of much
praise,

And I accept it, therefore; but do thou
Thy tongue refrain: to question them be mine;
For I divine thy wish; and they perchance,
For they were Greeks, might shun discourse
with thee."

When there the flame had come, where time
and place

Seemed fitting to my guide, he thus began:
"O ye, who dwell two spirits in one fire!
If, living, I of you did merit aught,
Whate'er the measure were of that desert,
When in the world my lofty strain I poured,
Move ye not on, till one of you unfold
In what clime death o'ertook him self-de-
stroyed."

Of the old flame forthwith the greater horn
Began to roll, murmuring, as a fire
That labors with the wind, then to and fro
Wagging the top, as a tongue uttering sounds,
Threw out its voice, and spake: "When I es-
caped

From Circe, who beyond a circling year
Had me held near Caieta by her charms,
Ere thus Æneas yet had named the shore;
Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
Of my old father, nor return of love,
That should have crowned Penelope with joy,
Could overcome in me the zeal I had
To explore the world, and search the ways of
life,

Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sailed
Into the deep illimitable main,
With but one bark, and the small faithful band
That yet cleaved to me. As Iberia far,
Far as Morocco, either shore I saw,
And the Sardinian and each isle beside
Which round that ocean bathes. Tardy with
age

Were I and my companions, when we came
To the strait pass, where Hercules ordained
The boundaries not to be o'erstepped by man.

The walls of Seville to my right I left,
On the other hand already Ceuta past.
'O brothers!' I began, 'who to the west
Through perils without number now have
reached;

To this the short remaining watch, that yet
Our senses have to wake, refuse not proof
Of the unpeopled world, following the track
Of Phœbus. Call to mind from whence ye
sprang:

Ye were not formed to live the life of brutes,
But virtue to pursue and knowledge high.'
With these few words I sharpened for the
voyage

The mind of my associates, that I then
Could scarcely have withheld them. To the
dawn

Our poop we turned, and for the witless flight
Made our oars wings, still gaining on the left.
Each star of the other pole night now beheld,
And ours so low, that from the ocean floor
It rose not. Five times re-illumed, as oft
Vanished the light from underneath the moon,
Since the deep way we entered, when from
far

Appeared a mountain dim, loftiest methought
Of all I e'er beheld. Joy seized us straight;
But soon to mourning changed. From the
new land

A whirlwind sprung, and at her foremost side
Did strike the vessel. Thrice it whirled her
round

With all the waves; the fourth time lifted up
The poop, and sank the prow; so fate decreed:
And over us the booming billow closed."

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

The Poet, treating of the same punishment as in the last Canto, relates that he turned towards a flame in which was the Count Guido da Montefeltro, whose inquiries respecting the state of Romagna he answers; and Guido is thereby induced to declare who he is, and why condemned to that torment.

Now upward rose the flame, and stilled its
light

To speak no more, and now passed on with
leave

From the mild poet gained; when following
came

Another, from whose top a sound confused,
Forth issuing, drew our eyes that way to look.

As the Sicilian bull, that rightfully
His cries first echoed who had shaped its
mould,

Did so rebellow, with the voice of him
Tormented, that the brazen monster seemed
Pierced through with pain; thus, while no way
they found,

Nor avenue immediate through the flame,
Into its language turned the dismal words:
But soon as they had won their passage forth,
Up from the point, which vibrating obeyed
Their motion at the tongue, these sounds were
heard:

"O thou! to whom I now direct my voice,

That lately didst exclaim in Lombard phrase,
'Depart thou; I solicit thee no more;' Though
somewhat tardy I perchance arrive,
Let it not irk thee here to pause awhile,
And with me parley: lo! it irks not me,
And yet I burn. If but e'en now thou fall
Into this blind world, from that pleasant land
Of Latium, whence I draw my sum of guilt,
Tell me if those who in Romagna dwell
Have peace or war. For of the mountains
there

Was I, betwixt Urbino and the height
Whence Tiber first unlocks his mighty flood."

Leaning I listened yet with heedful ear,
When, as he touched my side, the leader thus:
"Speak thou: he is a Latian." My reply
Was ready, and I spake without delay:
"O spirit! who art hidden here below,
Never was thy Romagna without war
In her proud tyrants' bosoms, nor is now:
But open war there left I none. The state,
Ravenna hath maintained this many a year,
Is steadfast. There Polenta's eagle broods;
And in his broad circumference of plume
O'ershadows Cervia. The green talons grasp
The land, that stood erewhile the proof so long
And piled in bloody heap the host of France.

"The old mastiff of Verruchio and the young,
That tore Montagna in their wrath, still make,
Where they are wont, an auger of their fangs.

"Lamone's city, and Santerno's, range
Under the lion of the snowy lair,
Inconstant partisan, that changeth sides,
Or ever summer yields to winter's frost.

And she, whose flank is washed of Savio's
wave,

As 'twixt the level and the steep she lies,
Lives so 'twixt tyrant power and liberty.

"Now tell us, I entreat thee, who art thou:
Be not more hard than others. In the world,
So may thy name still rear its forehead high."

Then roared awhile the fire, its sharpened
point

On either side waved, and thus breathed at
last:

"If I did think my answer were to one
Who ever could return unto the world,
This flame should rest unshaken. But since
ne'er,

If true be told me, any from this depth
Has found his upward way, I answer thee,
Nor fear lest infamy record the words.

"A man of arms at first, I clothed me then
In good Saint Francis' girdle, hoping so
To have made amends. And certainly my hope
Had failed not, but that he, whom curses light
on,

The high priest again seduced me into sin.
And how, and wherefore, listen while I tell.
Long as this spirit moved the bones and pulp
My mother gave me, less my deeds bespake
The nature of the lion than the fox.

All ways of winding subtlety I knew,
And with such art conducted, that the sound
Reached the world's limit. Soon as to that
part

Of life I found me come, when each behooves
To lower sails and gather in the lines;

That, which before had pleased me, then I
rued.

And to repentance and confession turned,
Wretch that I was; and well it had bested me.
The chief of the new Pharisees meantime,
Waging his warfare near the Lateran,
Not with the Saracens or Jews, (his foes
All Christians were, nor against Acre one
Had fought, nor trafficked in the Soldan's
land,)

He, his great charge nor sacred ministry.
In himself revered, nor in me that cord
Which used to mark with leanness whom it
girded.

As in Soracte, Constantine besought,
To cure his leprosy, Sylvester's aid;
So me, to cure the fever of his pride,
This man besought: my counsel to that end
He asked; and I was silent; for his words
Seemed drunken: but forthwith he thus resumed:

'From thy heart banish fear: of all offence
I hitherto absolve thee. In return,
Teach me my purpose so to execute,
That Penestrino cumber earth no more,
Heaven, as thou knowest, I have power to shut
And open: and the keys are therefore twain,
The which my predecessor meanly prized.'

"Then, yielding to the forceful arguments,
Of silence as more perilous I deemed,
And answered: 'Father! since thou washes
me

Clear of that guilt wherein I now must fall,

Large promise with performance scant, be
sure,

Shall make thee triumph in thy lofty seat.'

"When I was numbered with the dead, then
came

Saint Francis for me; but a cherub dark
He met, who cried, 'Wrong me not, he is mine,
And must below to join the wretched crew,
For the deceitful counsel which he gave.
E'er since I watched him, hovering at his hair.
No power can the impenitent absolve;
Nor to repent, and will, at once consist,
By contradiction absolute forbid.'

Oh misery! how I shook myself when he
Seized me, and cried, "Thou haply tought'st me
not

A disputant in logic so exact!"

To Minos down he bore me; and the judge
Twined eight times round his callous back the
tail,

Which biting with excess of rage, he spake:
'This is a guilty soul, that in the fire
Must vanish.' Hence, perdition-doomed, I rove
A prey to rankling sorrow, in this garb."

When he had thus fulfilled his words, the
flame

In dolor parted, beating to and fro,
And writhing its sharp horn. We onward
went,

I and my leader, up along the rock
Far as another arch, that overhangs
The foss, wherein the penalty is paid
Of those who load them with committed sin.

CANTO XXVIII.

Who, e'en in words unfettered, might at full
Tell of the wounds and blood that now I saw,
Though he repeated oft the tale? No tongue
So vast a theme could equal, speech and
thought

Both impotent alike. If in one band
Collected, stood the people all, who e'er
Poured on Apulia's happy soil their blood,
Slain by the Trojans, and in that long war,
When of the rings the measured booty made
A pile so high, as Rome's historian writes
Who errs not; with the multitude, that felt
The griding force of Guiscard's Norman steel,
And those the rest, whose bones are gathered
yet

At Ceperano, there where treachery
Branded the Apulian name, or where beyond
Thy walls, O Tagliacozzo, without arms
The old Alardo conquered; and his limbs
One were to show transpierced, another his
Clean lopt away; a spectacle like this
Were but a thing of naught, to the hideous
sight

Of the ninth chasm. A rundlet, that hath lost
Its middle or side stave, gaps not so wide
As one I marked, torn from the chin through-
out

Down to the hinder passage: 'twixt the legs
Dangling his entrails hung, the midriff lay
Open to view, and wretched ventricle,

That turns the englutted aliment to dross.

Whilst eagerly I fix on him my gaze,
He eyed me, with his hands laid his breast
bare,

And cried, "Now mark how I do rip me: lo!
How is Mohammed mangled: before me
Walks Ali weeping, from the chin his face
Cleft to the forelock; and the others all,
Whom here thou seest, while they lived, did
sow

Scandal and schism, and therefore thus are rent.
A fiend is here behind, who with his sword
Hacks us thus cruelly, slivering again
Each of this ream, when we have compast round
The dismal way; for first our gashes close
Ere we repass before him. But, say who
Art thou, that standest musing on the rock,
Haply so lingering to delay the pain
Sentenced upon thy crimes."—"Him death not
yet,"

My guide rejoined, "hath overta'en, nor sin
Conducts to torment; but, that he may make
Full trial of your state, I who am dead
Must through the depths of hell, from orb to
orb,
Conduct him. Trust my words; for they are
true."

More than a hundred spirits, when that they
heard,

Stood in the foss to mark me, through amaze
Forgetful of their pangs, "Thou, who perchance
Shalt shortly view the sun, this warning thou
Bear to Dolcino: bid him, if he wish not,
Here soon to follow me, that with good store
Of food he arm him, lest imprisoning snows

Yield him a victim to Novara's power;
No easy conquest else:" with foot upraised
For stepping, spake Mohammed, on the ground
Then fixed it to depart. Another shade,
Pierced in the throat, his nostrils mutilate
E'en from beneath the eyebrows, and one ear
Lopt off, who, with the rest, through wonder
stood

Gazing, before the rest advanced, and bared
His wind-pipe, that without was all o'er-smeared
With crimson stain. "O thou!" said he, "whom
sin

Condemns not, and whom erst (unless too near
Resemblance do deceive me) I aloft
Have seen on Latian ground, call thou to mind
Piero of Medicina, if again
Returning, thou behold'st the pleasant land
That from Vercelli slopes to Mercabó;
And there instruct the twain, whom Fano boasts
Her worthiest sons, Guido and Angelo,
That if 'tis given us here to scan aright
The future, they out of life's tenement
Shall be cast forth, and whelmed under the
waves

Near to Cattolica, through perfidy
Of a fell tyrant. 'Twixt the Cyprian isle
And Balearic, ne'er hath Neptune seen
An injury so foul, by pirates done,
To Argive crew of old. That one-eyed traitor
(Whose realm, there is a spirit here were fain
His eye had still lacked sight of) them shall
bring

To conference with him, then so shape his end,
That they shall need not 'gainst Focara's wind
Offer up vow nor prayer." I answering thus:

"Declare, as thou dost wish that I above
May carry tidings of thee, who is he,
In whom that sight doth wake such sad remembrance."

Forthwith he laid his hand on the cheek-bone
Of one, his fellow-spirit, and his jaws
Expanding, cried: "Lo! this is he I wot of:
He speaks not for himself: the outcast this,
Who overwhelmed the doubt in Caesar's mind,
Affirming that delay to men prepared
Was ever harmful." Oh! how terrified
Methought was Curio, from whose throat was
cut

The tongue, which spake that hardy word.

Then one,
Maimed of each hand, uplifted in the gloom
The bleeding stumps, that they with gory spots
Sullied his face and cried: "Remember thee
Of Mosca too; I who, alas! exclaimed,
'The deed once done, there is an end,' that
proved

A seed of sorrow to the Tuscan race."

I added: "Ay, and death to thine own tribe."

When, heaping woe on woe, he hurried off,
As one grief-stung to madness. But I there
Still lingered to behold the troop, and saw
Thing, such as I may fear without more proof
To tell of, but that conscience makes me firm,
The boon companion, who her strong breast-
plate

Buckles on him, that feels no guilt within,
And bids him on and fear not. Without doubt
I saw, and yet it seems to pass before me,
A headless trunk, that even as the rest
Of the sad flock paced onward. By the hair

It bore the severed member, lantern-wise
Pendent in hand, which looked at us, and said,
"Woe's me!" The spirit lighted thus himself;
And two there were in one, and one in two.
How that may be, he knows who ordereth so.

When at the bridge's foot direct he stood,
His arm aloft he reared, thrusting the head
Full in our view, that nearer we might hear
The words, which thus it uttered: "Now behold
This grievous torment, thou, who breathing
go'st

To spy the dead: behold, if any else
Be terrible as this. And that on earth
Thou mayst bear tidings of me, know that I
Am Bertrand, he of Born, who gave king John
The counsel mischievous. Father and son
I set at mutual war. For Absalom
And David more did not Ahithophel,
Spurring them on maliciously to strife.
For parting these so closely knit, my brain
Parted, alas! I carry from its source,
That in this trunk inhabits. Thus the law
Of retribution fiercely works in me."

CANTO XXIX.

So were mine eyes inebriate with the view
Of the vast multitude, whom various wounds
Disfigured, that they longed to stay and weep.

But Virgil roused me: "What yet gazest on?
Wherefore doth fasten yet thy sight below
Among the maimed and miserable shades?
Thou hast not shown in any chasm beside

This weakness. Know, if thou wouldst number
them,

That two and twenty miles the valley winds
Its circuit, and already is the moon
Beneath our feet: the time permitted now
Is short; and more, not seen, remains to see."

"If thou," I straight replied, "hadst weighed
the cause,
For which I looked, thou hadst perchance ex-
cused

The tarrying still." My leader part pursued
His way, the while I followed, answering him,
And adding thus: "Within that cave I deem,
Whereon so fixedly I held my ken,
There is a spirit dwells, one of my blood,
Wailing the crime that costs him now so dear."

Then spake my master: "Let thy soul no
more
Afflict itself for him. Direct elsewhere
Its thought, and leave him. At the bridge's
foot

I marked how he did point with menacing look
At thee, and heard him by the others named
Geri of Bello. Thou so wholly then
Wert busied with his spirit, who once ruled
The towers of Hautefort, that thou lookedst not
That way, ere he was gone."—"O guide beloved!
His violent death yet unavenged," said I,
"By any, who are partners in his shame,
Made him contemptuous; therefore, as I think,
He passed me speechless by; and, doing so,
Hath made me more compassionate his fate."

So we discoursed to where the rock first
showed

The other valley, had more light been there,
E'en to the lowest depth. Soon as we came
O'er the last cloister in the dismal rounds
Of Malebolge, and the brotherhood
Were to our view exposed, then many a dart
Of sore lament assailed me, headed all
With points of thrilling pity, that I closed
Both ears against the volley with mine hands.

As were the torment, if each lazar-house
Of Valdichiana, in the sultry time
'Twixt July and September, with the isle
Sardinia and Maremma's pestilent fen,
Had heaped their maladies all in one foss
Together; such was here the torment: dire
The stench, as issuing streams from festered
limbs.

We on the utmost shore of the long rock
Descended still to leftward. Then my sight
Was livelier to explore the depth, wherein
The minister of the most mighty Lord,
All-searching Justice, dooms to punishment
The forgers noted on her dread record.

More rueful was it not methinks to see
The nation in Aegina droop, what time
Each living thing e'en to the little worm,
All fell, so full of malice was the air,
(And afterward, as bards of yore have told,
The ancient people were restored anew
From seed of emmets,) than was here to see
The spirits, that languished through the murky
vale,

Up-piled on many a stack. Confused they lay,
One o'er the belly, o'er the shoulders one
Rolled of another; sidling crawled a third
Along the dismal pathway. Step by step

We journeyed on, in silence looking round,
And listening those diseased, who strove in vain
To lift their forms. Then two I marked, that
sat

Propt 'gainst each other, as two brazen pans
Set to retain the heat. From head to foot,
A tetter barked them round. Nor saw I e'er
Groom currying so fast, for whom his lord
Impatient waited, or himself perchance
Tired with long watching, as of these each one
Plied quickly his keen nails, through furious-
ness

Of ne'er abated pruriency. The crust
Came down from underneath in flakes, like
scales

Scraped from the bream, or fish of broader
mail.

"O thou! who with thy fingers rendest off
Thy coat of proof," thus spake my guide to one,
"And sometimes makest tearing pincers of
them,

Tell me if any born of Latian land
Be among these within: so may thy nails
Serve thee for everlasting to this toil."

"Both are Latium," weeping he replied,
"Whom tortured thus thou seest: but who art
thou

That hast inquired of us?" To whom my guide:
"One that descend with this man, who yet lives,
From rock to rock, and show him hell's abyss."

Then started they asunder, and each turned
Trembling toward us, with the rest, whose ear
Those words redounding struck. To me my
liege

Addressed him: "Speak to them what'er thou list."

And I therewith began: "So may no time
Filch your remembrance from the thoughts of
men

In the upper world, but after many suns
Survive it, as ye tell me, who ye are,
And of what race ye come. Your punishment,
Unseemly and disgusting in its kind,
Deter you not from opening thus much to me."

"Arezzo was my dwelling," answered one,
"And me Albero of Siena brought
To die by fire: but that, for which I died,
Leads me not here. True is, in sport I told
him,

That I had learned to wing my flight in air:
And he, admiring much, as he was void
Of wisdom, willed me to declare to him
The secret of mine art; and only hence,
Because I made him not a Daedalus,
Prevailed on one supposed his sire to burn me.
But Minos to this chasm, last of the ten,
For that I practised alchemy on earth,
Has doomed me. Him no subterfuge eludes."

Then to the bard I spake: "Was ever race
Light as Siena's? Sure not France herself
Can show a tribe so frivolous and vain."

The other leprous spirit heard my words,
And thus returned: "Be Stricca from this
charge

Exempted, he who knew so temperately
To lay out fortune's gifts; and Niccolo,
Who first the spice's costly luxury
Discovered in that garden, where such seed
Roots deepest in the soil: and be that troop

Exempted, with whom Caccia of Asciano
Lavished his vineyards and wide spreading
woods,

And his rare wisdom Abbagliato showed
A spectacle for all. That thou mayst know
Who seconds thee against the Sienese
Thus gladly, bend this way thy sharpened sight,
That well my face may answer to thy ken;
So shalt thou see I am Capocchio's ghost,
Who forged transmuted metals by the power
Of Alchemy; and if I can scan thee right,
Thou needs must well remember how I aped
Creative nature by my subtle art."

CANTO XXX.

What time resentment burned in Juno's breast
For Semele against the Theban blood,
As more than once in dire mischance was rued;
Such fatal frenzy seized on Athamas,
That he his spouse beholding with a babe
Laden on either arm, "Spread out," he cried
"The meshes, that I take the lioness
And the young lions at the pass:" then forth
Stretched he his merciless talons, grasping one,
One helpless innocent, Learchus named,
Whom swinging down he dashed upon a rock;
And with her other burden, self-destroyed,
The hapless mother plunged. And when the
pride
Of all presuming Troy fell from its height,
By fortune overwhelmed, and the old king

With his realm perished; then did Hecuba,
A wretch forlorn and captive, when she saw
Polyxena first slaughtered, and her son,
Her Polydorus, on the wild sea-beach
Next met the mourner's view, then reft of sense
Did she run barking even as a dog;
Such mighty power had grief to wrench her
soul.

But ne'er the Furies, or of Thebes, or Troy,
With such fell cruelty were seen, their goads
Infixing in the limbs of man or beast.
As now two pale and naked ghosts I saw,
That gnarling wildly scampered, like the swine
Excluded from his sty. One reached Capoc-
chio,

And in the neck-joint sticking deep his fangs,
Dragged him, that, o'er the solid pavement
rubbed

His belly stretched out prone. The other shape,
He of Arezzo, there left trembling, spake:

"That sprite of air is Schicchi; in like mood
Of random mischief vents he still his spite."

To whom I answering: "Oh! as thou dost
hope

The other may not flesh its jaws on thee,
Be patient to inform us, who it is,
Ere it speed hence."—"That is the ancient soul
Of wretched Myrrha," he replied, "who burned
With most unholy flame for her own sire,
And a false shape assuming, so performed
The deed of sin; e'en as the other there,
That onward passes, dared to counterfeit
Donati's features, to feigned testament
The seal affixing, that himself might gain,
For his own share, the lady of the herd."

When vanished the two furious shades, on
whom

Mine eye was held, I turned it back to view
The other cursed spirits. One I saw
In fashion like a lute, had but the groin
Been severed where it meets the forked part.
Swoln dropsy, disproportioning the limbs
With il-converted moisture, that the paunch
Suits not the visage, opened wide his lips,
Gasping as in the hectic man for drought,
One towards the chin, the other upward curled.

"O ye! who in this world of misery,
Wherefore I know not, are exempt from pain,"
Thus he began, "attentively regard
Adamo's woe. When living, full supply
Ne'er lacked me of what most I coveted;
One drop of water now, alas! I crave.
The rills, that glitter down the grassy slopes
Of Casentino, making fresh and soft
The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream,
Stand ever in my view; and not in vain;
For more the pictured semblance dries me up,
Much more than the disease, which makes the
flesh

Desert these shrivelled cheeks. So from the
place,
Where I transgressed, stern justice urging me,
Takes means to quicken more my laboring
sighs.

There is Romena, where I falsified
The metal with the Baptist's form imprest,
For which on earth I left my body burnt.
But if I here might see the sorrowing soul
Of Guido, Alessandro, or their brother,
For Branda's limpid spring I would not change

The welcome sight. One is e'en now within,
If truly the mad spirits tell, that round
Are wandering. But wherein besteads me that?
My limbs are fettered. Were I but so light,
That I each hundred years might move one
inch,

I had set forth already on this path,
Seeking him out amidst the shapeless crew,
Although eleven miles it wind, not less
Than half of one across. They brought me
down

Among this tribe; induced by them, I stamped
The florins with three carats of alloy."

"Who are that abject pair," I next inquired,
"That closely bounding thee upon thy right
Lie smoking, like a hand in winter steeped
In the chill stream?"—"When to this gulf I
dropped,"

He answered, "here I found them; since that
hour

They have not turned, nor ever shall, I ween,
Till time hath run his course. One is that
dame,

The false accuser of the Hebrew youth;
Sinon the other, that false Greek from Troy.
Sharp fever drains the reeky moistness out,
In such a cloud upstreamed." When that he
heard,

One, galied perchance to be so darkly named,
With clenched hand smote him on the braced
paunch,

That like a drum resounded: but forthwith
Adamo smote him on the face, the blow
Returning with his arm, that seemed as hard.

"Though my o'erweighty limbs have ta'en
from me

The power to move," said he, "I have an arm
At liberty for such employ." To whom
Was answered: "When thou wentest to the fire,
Thou hadst it not so ready at command,
Then readier when it coined the impostor gold."

And thus the dropsied: "Ay, now speak'st
thou true:

But there thou gavest not such true testimony,
When thou wast questioned of the truth, at
Troy."

"If I spake false, thou falsely stampedst the
coin,"

Said Sinon: "I am here for but one fault,
And thou for more than any imp beside."

"Remember," he replied, "O perjured one!
The horse remember, that did teem with death;
And all the world be witness to thy guilt."

"To thine," returned the Greek, "witness
the thirst

Whence thy tongue cracks, witness the fluid
mound

Reared by thy belly up before thine eyes,
A mass corrupt." To whom the coiner thus:
"Thy mouth gapes wide as ever to let pass
Its evil saying. Me if thirst assails,
Yet I am stuff with moisture. Thou art
parched:

Pains rack thy head; no urging wouldst thou
need

To make thee lap Narcissus' mirror up."

I was all fixed to listen, when my guide
Admonished: "Now beware. A little more,
And I do quarrel with thee." I perceived

How angrily he spake, and towards him turned
With shame so poignant, as remembered yet
Confounds me. As a man that dreams of
harm

Befallen him, dreaming wishes it a dream,
And that which is, desires as if it were not;
Such then was I, who, wanting power to speak,
Wished to excuse myself, and all the while
Excused me, though unweeting that I did.
"More grievous fault than thine has been, less
shame,"

My master cried, "might expiate. Therefore
cast

All sorrow from thy soul; and if again
Chance bring thee where like conference is
held,

Think I am ever at thy side. To hear
Such wrangling is a joy for vulgar minds."

CANTO XXXI.

THE very tongue, whose keen reproof before
Had wounded me, that either cheek was
stained,

Now ministered my cure. So have I heard,
Achilles' and his father's javelin caused
Pain first, and then the boon of health restored.

Turning our back upon the vale of woe,
We crossed the encircled mound in silence.

There

Was less than day and less than night, that
far

Mine eye advanced not: but I heard a horn
Sounded so loud, the peal it rang had made
The thunder feeble. Following its course
The adverse way, my strained eyes were bent
On that one spot. So terrible a blast
Orlando blew not, when that dismal rout
Ô'erthrew the host of Chârlemagne, and
quenched

His saintly warfare. Thitherward not long
My head was raised, when many a lofty tower
Methought I spied. "Master," said I, "what
land

Is this?" He answered straight: "Too long
a space

Of intervening darkness has thine eye
To traverse; thou has therefore widely erred
In thy imagining. Thither arrived
Thou well shalt see, how distance can delude
The sense. A little therefore urge thee on."

Then tenderly he caught me by the hand;
"Yet know," said he, "ere further we advance,
That it less strange may seem, these are not
towers,

But giants. In the pit they stand immersed,
Each from his navel downward, round the
bank."

As when a fog disperseth gradually,
Our vision traces what the mist involves
Condensed in air; so piercing through the
gross

And gloomy atmosphere, as more and more
We neared toward the brink, mine error fled
And fear came o'er me. As with circling
round

Of turrets, Mentereggion crowns his walls;
E'en thus the shore, encompassing the abyss,
Was turreted with giants, half their length
Uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from heaven
Yet threatens, when his muttering thunder
rolls

Of one already I descried the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and of the belly huge
Great part, and both arms down along his
ribs.

All-teeming Nature, when her plastic hand
Left framing of these monsters, did display
Past doubt her wisdom, taking from mad War
Such slaves to do his bidding; and if she
Repent her not of the elephant and whale,
Who ponders well confesses her therein
Wiser and more discreet; for which brute
force

And evil will are backed with subtlety,
Resistance none avails. His visage seemed
In length and bulk, as doth the pine that tops
Saint Peter's Roman fane; and the other bones
Of like proportion, so that from above
The bank, which girdled him below, such height
Arose his stature, that three Frieslanders
Had striven in vain to reach but to his hair
Full thirty ample palms was he exposed
Downward from whence a man his garment
loops.

"Raphel bai ameth, sabi almi:"

So shouted his fierce lips, which sweeter hymns
Became not; and my guide addressed him thus:
"O senseless spirit! let thy horn for thee
Interpret: therewith vent thy rage, if rage

Or other passion wring thee. Search thy neck,
There shalt thou find the belt that binds it on.
Spirit confused! lo, on thy mighty breast
Where hangs the baldrick!" Then to me he
spake:

"He doth accuse himself. Nimrod is this,
Through whose ill counsel in the world no more
One tongue prevails. But pass we on, nor
waste

Our words; for so each language is to him,
As his to others, understood by none."

Then to the leftward turning sped we forth,
And at a sling's throw found another shade
Far fiercer and more huge. I cannot say
What master hand had girt him; but he held
Behind the right arm fettered, and before,
The other, with a chain, that fastened him
From the neck down; and five times round his
form

Apparent met the wreathed links. "This proud
one

Would of his strength against almighty Jove
Make trial," said my guide: "whence he is
thus

Requited: Ephialtes him they call.

Great was his prowess, when the giants brought
Fear on the gods: those arms, which then he
plied,

Now moves he never." Forthwith I returned:
"Fain would I, if 'twere possible, mine eyes,
Of Briareus immeasurable, gained
Experience next." He answered: "Thou shalt
see

Not far from hence Antaeus, who both speaks
And is unfettered, who shall place us there

Where guilt is at its depth. Far onward stands
Whom thou wouldst fain behold, in chains, and
made

Like to this spirit, save that in his looks
More fell he seems." By violent earthquake
rocked

Ne'er shook a tower, so reeling to its base,
As Ephialtes. More than ever then
I dreaded death; nor than the terror more
Had needed, if I had not seen the cords
That held him fast. We straightway journey-
ing on.

Came to Antaeus, who, five ells complete
Without the head, forth issued from the cave.

"O thou, who in the fortunate vale, that
made

Great Scipio heir of glory, when his sword
Drove back the troop of Hannibal in flight,
Who thence of old didst carry for thy spoil
An hundred lions; and if thou hadst fought
In the high conflict on thy brethren's side,
Seems as men yet believed, that through thine
arm

The sons of earth had conquered: now vouch-
safe

To place us down beneath, where numbing cold
Locks up Cocytus. Force not that we crave
Or Tityus' help or Typhon's. Here is one
Can give what in this realm ye covet. Stoop
Therefore, nor scornfully distort thy lip.
He in the upper world can yet bestow
Renown on thee; for he doth live, and looks
For life yet longer, if before the time
Grace call him not unto herself." Thus spake

The teacher. He in haste forth stretched his
hands

And caught my guide. Alcides whilom felt
That grapple, straitened sore. Soon as my
guide

Had felt it, he bespake me thus: "This way,
That I may clasp thee;" then so caught me up,
That we were both one burden. As appears
The tower of Carisenda, from beneath
Where it doth lean, if chance a passing cloud
So sail across that opposite it hangs;
Such then Antaeus seemed, as at mine ease
I marked him stooping. I were fain at times
To have past another way. Yet in the abyss,
That Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs,
Lightly he placed us; nor, there leaning, stayed;
But rose, as in a bark the stately mast.

CANTO XXXII.

COULD I command rough rhymes and hoarse, to
suit

That hole of sorrow o'er which every rock
His firm abutment rears, then might the vein
Of fancy rise full springing: but not mine
Such measures, and with faltering awe I touch
The mighty theme; for to describe the depth
Of all the universe, is no emprise
To jest with, and demands a tongue not used
To infant babbling. But let them assist
My song, the tuneful maidens, by whose aid
Amphion walled in Thebes; so with the truth
My speech shall best accord. Oh ill-starred folk,
Beyond all others wretched! who abide

In such a mansion, as scarce thought finds
words

To speak of, better had ye here on earth
Been flocks, or mountain goats. As down we
stood

In the dark pit beneath the giants' feet,
But lower far than they, and I did gaze
Still on the lofty battlement, a voice
Bespake me thus: "Look how thou walkest,
Take

Good heed, thy soles do tread not on the heads
Of thy poor brethren." Thereupon I turned,
And saw before and underneath my feet
A lake, whose frozen surface liker seemed
To glass than water. Not so thick a veil
In winter e'er hath Austrian Danube spread
O'er his still course, nor Tanais far remote
Under the chilling sky. Rolled o'er that mass
Had Tabernich or Pietrapana fallen
Not e'en its rim had creaked. As peeps the
frog

Croaking above the wave, what time in dreams
The village gleaner oft pursues her toils,
So, to where modest shame appears, thus low.
Blue pinched and shrined in ice the spirits
stood,

Moving their teeth in shrill note like the stork.
His face each downward held; their mouth the
cold,

Their eyes expressed the dolor of their heart.

A space I looked around, then at my feet
Saw two so strictly joined, that of their head
The very hairs were mingled. "Tell me ye,
Whose bosoms thus together press," said I

"Who are ye?" At that sound their necks they bent;

And when their looks were lifted up to me,
Straightway their eyes, before all moist within,
Distilled upon their lips, and the frost bound
The tears betwixt those orbs, and held them there.

Plank unto plank hath never cramp closed up
So stoutly. Whence, like two enraged goats,
They clashed together: them such fury seized.

And one, from whom the bold both ears had
reft,

Exclaimed, still looking downward: "Why on
us

Dost speculate so long? If thou wouldst know
Who are these two, the valley, whence his wave
Bisenzio slopes, did for its master own
Their sire Alberto, and next him themselves.
They from one body issued: and throughout
Caina thou mayst search, nor find a shade
More worthy in congealment to be fixed;
Not him, whose breast and shadow Arthur's
hand

At that one blow dissevered; not Foccaccia;
No, not this spirit, whose o'erjutting head
Obstructs my onward view: he tore the name
Of Mascheroni: Tuscan if thou be,
Well knowest who he was. And to cut short
All further question, in my form behold
What once was Camiccione. I await
Carlino here my kinsman, whose deep guilt
Shall wash out mine." A thousand visages
Then marked I, which the keen and eager cold
Had shaped into a doggish grin; whence creeps
A shivering horror o'er me, at the thought

Of those frore shallows. While we journeyed
on

Toward the middle, at whose point unites
All heavy substance, and I trembling went
Through that eternal chillness, I know not
If will it were, or destiny, or chance,
But, passing 'midst the heads, my foot did strike
With violent blow against the face of one.

"Wherefore dost bruise me?" weeping he ex-
claimed,

"Unless thy errand be some fresh revenge
For Montaperto, wherefore troublest me?"

I thus: "Instructor, now await me here,
That I through him may rid me of my doubt:
Thenceforth what haste thou wilt." The
teacher paused

And to that shade I spake, who bitterly
Still cursed me in his wrath. "What art thou,
speak,

That railest thus on others?" He replied:

"Now who art thou, that smiting others'
cheeks,

Through Antenora roamest, with such force
As were past sufferance, wert thou living still?"

"And I am living, to thy joy perchance,"
Was my reply, "if fame be dear to thee,
That with the rest I may thy name enroll."

"The contrary of what I covet most,"
Said he, "thou tender'st; hence! nor vex me
more.

Ill knowest thou to flatter in this vale."

Then seizing on his hinder scalp I cried:
"Name thee, or not a hair shall tarry here."

"Rend all away," he answered. "yet for that
I will not tell, nor show thee, who I am,

Though at my head thou pluck a thousand times."

Now I had grasped his tresses, and stript off More than one tuft, he barking, with his eyes Drawn in and downward, when another cried, "What ails thee, Bocca? Sound not loud enough Thy chattering teeth, but thou must bark outright?

What devil wrings thee?"—"Now," said I, "be dumb,

Accursed traitor! To thy shame, of thee True tidings will I bear."—"Off!" he replied; "Tell what thou list: but, as thou scape from hence,

To speak of him whose tongue hath been so glib,

Forget not: here he wails the Frenchman's gold.

'Him of Duera,' thou canst say, 'I marked, Where the starved sinners pine.' If thou be asked

What other shade was with them, at thy side Is Beccaria, whose red gorge disdained The biting axe of Florence. Further on, If I misdeem not, Soldanieri bides, With Ganelon, and Tribaldello, him Who oped Faenza when the people slept," We now had left him, passing on our way, When I beheld two spirits by the ice Pent in one hollow, that the head of one Was cowl unto the other; and as bread Is ravened up through hunger, the uppermost Did so apply his fangs to the other's brain, Where the spine joins it. Not more furiously

On Menalippus' temples Tydeus gnawed,
Than on that skull and on its garbage he.

"O thou! who show'st so beastly sign of
hate

'Gainst him thou prey'st on, let me hear," said
I,

"The cause, on such condition, that if right
Warrant thy grievance, knowing who ye are,
And what the color of his sinning was,
I may repay thee in the world above,
If that, wherewith I speak, be moist so long."

CANTO XXXIII.

His jaws uplifting from their fell repast,
That sinner wiped them on the hairs o' the
head,

Which he behind had mangled, then began:

"Thy will obeying, I call up afresh

Sorrow past cure; which, but to think of,
wrings

My heart, or ere I tell on't. But if words,

That I may utter, shall prove seed to bear

Fruit of eternal infamy to him,

The traitor whom I gnaw at, thou at once

Shalt see me speak and weep. Who thou mayst
be

I know not, nor how here below art come:

But Florentine thou seemest of a truth,

When I do hear thee. Know, I was on earth

Count Ugolino, and the Archbishop he,

Ruggieri. Why I neighbor him so close,

Now list. That through effect of his ill
thoughts

In him my trust reposing, I was ta'en

And after murdered, need is not I tell.

What therefore thou canst not have heard, that
is,

How cruel was the murder, shalt thou hear,

And know if he have wronged me. A small
grate

Within that mew, which for my sake the name

Of famine bears, where others yet must pine,

Already through its opening several moons

Had shown me, when I slept the evil sleep

That from the future tore the curtain off.

This one, methought, as master of the sport,

Rode forth to chase the gaunt wolf, and his
whelps,

Unto the mountain which forbids the sight

Of Lucca to the Pisan. With lean brachs

Inquisitive and keen, before him ranged

Lanfranchi with Sismondi and Gualandi.

After short course the father and the sons

Seemed tired and lagging, and methought I saw

The sharp tusks gore their sides. When I
awoke,

Before the dawn, amid their sleep I heard

My sons (for they were with me) weep and
ask

For bread. Right cruel art thou, if no pang

Thou feel at thinking what my heart foretold;

And if not now, why use thy tears to flow?

Now had they wakened; and the hour drew
near

When they were wont to bring us food; the
mind

Of each misgave him through his dream, and I
Heard, at its outlet underneath locked up
The horrible tower: whence, uttering not a
word,

I looked upon the visage of my sons.
I wept not: so all stone I felt within.
They wept: and one, my little Anselm, cried:
‘Thou lookest so! Father, what ails thee?’
Yet I shed no tear, nor answered all that day
Nor the next night, until another sun
Came out upon the world. When a faint beam
Had to our doleful prison made its way,
And in four countenances I descried
The image of my own, on either hand
Through agony I bit; and they, who thought
I did it through desire of feeding, rose
O’ the sudden, and cried, ‘Father, we should
grieve

Far less, if thou wouldst eat of us: thou gavest
These weeds of miserable flesh we wear;
And do thou strip them off from us again.’
Then, not to make them sadder, I kept down
My spirit in stillness. That day and the next
We all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth!
Why open’dst not upon us? When we came
To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet
Outstretched did fling him, crying, ‘Hast no
help

For me, my father!’ There he died; and e’en
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three

Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and the sixth;

Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope

Over them all, and for three days aloud
Called on them who were dead. Then, fasting
got

The mastery of grief." Thus having spoke,
Once more upon the wretched skull his teeth
He fastened like a mastiff's 'gainst the bone,
Firm and unyielding. Oh, thou Pisa! shame
Of all the people, who their dwelling make
In that fair region, where the Italian voice
Is heard; since that thy neighbors are so slack
To punish, from their deep foundations rise
Capraia and Gorgona, and dam up
The mouth of Arno; that each soul in thee
May perish in the waters. What if fame
Reported that thy castles were betrayed
By Ugolino, yet no right hadst thou
To stretch his children on the rack. For them,
Brigata, Uguccione, and the pair
Of gentle ones, of whom my song hath told,
Their tender years, thou modern Thebes, did
make

Uncapable of guilt. Onward we passed,
Where others, scarfed in rugged folds of ice,
Not on their feet were turned, but each re-
versed.

There, very weeping suffers not to weep;
For, at their eyes, grief, seeking passage, finds
Impediment, and rolling inward turns

For increase of sharp anguish: the first tears
Hang clustered, and like crystal visors show,
Under the socket brimming all the cup.

Now though the cold had from my face dis-
lodged

Each feeling, as 'twere callous, yet meseemed
Some breath of wind I felt. "Whence cometh
this,"

Said I, "my Master? Is not here below
All vapor quenched?"—"Thou shalt be speed-
ily,"

He answered, "where thine eyes shall tell thee
whence,

The cause descrying of this airy shower."

Then cried out one, in the chill crust who
mourned:

"O souls! so cruel, that the farthest post
Hath been assigned you, from this face remove
The hardened veil; that I may vent the grief
Impregnate at my heart, some little space,
Ere it congeal again." I thus replied:

"Say who thou wast, if thou wouldst have
mine aid;

And if I extricate thee not, far down
As to the lowest ice may I descend."

"The friar Alberigo," answered he,

"Am I, who from the evil garden plucked
Its fruitage, and am here repaid, the date
More luscious for my fig."—"Hah!" I ex-
claimed,

"Art thou too dead?"—"How in the world aloft
It fareth with my body," answered he,

"I am right ignorant. Such privilege
Hath Ptolomea, that oft-times the soul
Drops hither, ere by Atropos divorced.
And that thou mayst wipe out more willingly
The glazed tear-drops that o'erlay mine eyes,
Know that the soul, that moment she betrays,
As I did, yields her body to a fiend
Who after moves and governs it at will,
Till all its time be rounded: headlong she
Falls to this cistern. And perchance above
Doth yet appear the body of a ghost,
Who bear behind me winters. Him thou
know'st,

If thou but newly art arrived below.
The years are many that have past away,
Since to this fastness Branca Doria came."

"Now," answered I, "methinks thou mockest
me,
For Branca Doria never yet hath died,
But doth all natural functions of a man,
Eats, drinks, and sleeps, and putteth raiment
on,"

He thus: "Not yet unto that upper foss
By th' evil talons guarded, where the pitch,
Tenacious boils, had Michel Zanche reached,
When this one left a demon in his stead
In his own body, and of one his kin,
Who with him treachery wrought. But now
put forth
Thy hand, and ope mine eyes." I oped them
not.

Ill manners were best courtesy to him.

Ah Genoese! men perverse in every way,
With every foulness stained, why from the
earth

Are ye not cancelled? Such an one of yours
I with Romagna's darkest spirit found,
As, for his doings, even now in soul
Is in Cocytus plunged, and yet doth seem
In body still alive upon the earth.

CANTO XXXIV.

"The banners of Hell's Monarch do come forth
Toward us; therefore look," so spake my guide,
"If thou discern him." As, when breathes a
cloud

Heavy and dense, or when the shades of night
Fall on our hemisphere, seems viewed from far
A windmill, which the blast stirs briskly
round;

Such was the fabric then methought I saw.

To shield me from the wind, forthwith I
drew

Behind my guide: no covert else was there.

Now came I (and with fear I bid my strain
Record the marvel) where the souls were all
Whelmed underneath, transparent, as through
glass

Pellucid the frail stem. Some prone were laid;
Others stood upright, this upon the soles,

That on his head, a third with face to feet
Arched like a bow. When to the point we
came,

Whereat my guide was pleased that I should
see

The creature eminent in beauty once,
He from before me stepped and made me
pause.

"Lo!" he exclaimed, "lo Dis; and lo the place,
Where thou hast need to arm thy heart with
strength."

How frozen and how faint I then became,
Ask me not, reader! for I write it not;
Since words would fail to tell thee of my state.
I was not dead nor living. Think thyself,
If quick conception work in thee at all,
How I did feel. That emperor, who sways
The realm of sorrow, at mid breast from the
ice

Stood forth; and I in stature am more like
A giant, than the giants are his arms.
Mark now how great that whole must be,
which suits

With such a part. If he were beautiful
As he is hideous now, and yet did dare
To scowl upon his Maker, well from him
May all our misery flow. Oh what a sight!
How passing strange it seemed, when I did
spy

Upon his head three faces: one in front
Of hue vermilion, the other two with this
Midway each shoulder joined and at the crest;

The right 'twixt wan and yellow seemed; the
left

To look on, such as come from whence old
Nile

Stoops to the lowlands. Under each shot forth
Two mighty wings, enormous as became
A bird so vast. Sails never such I saw
Outstretched on the wide sea. No plumes had
they.

But were in texture like a bat; and these
He flapped i' th' air, that from him issued still
Three winds, wherewith Cocytus to its depth
Was frozen. At six eyes he wept: the tears
Adown three chins distilled with bloody foam.
At every mouth his teeth a sinner champ'd,
Bruised as with ponderous engine; so that
three

Were in this guise tormented. But far more
Than from that gnawing, was the foremost
panged

By the fierce rending, whence oft-times the
back

Was stript of all its skin. "That upper spirit,
Who hath worst punishment," so spake my
guide,

"Is Judas, he that hath his head within
And plies the feet without. Of th' other two,
Whose heads are under, from the murky jaw
Who hangs, is Brutus: lo! how he doth writhe
And speaks not. The other, Cassius, that ap-
pears

So large of limb. But night now re-ascends;

And it is time for parting. All is seen."

I clipped him round the neck; for so he bade:

And noting time and place, he, when the wings
Enough were oped, caught fast the shaggy
sides,

And down from pile to pile descending stepped
Between the thick fell and the jagged ice.

Soon as he reached the point, whereat the
thigh

Upon the swelling of the haunches turns,
My leader there, with pain and struggling
hard,

Turned round his head where his feet stood
before,

And grappled at the fell as one who mounts;
That into hell methought we turned again.

"Except that by such stairs as these," thus
spake

The teacher, panting like a man forespent,

"We must depart from evil so extreme:"

Then at a rocky opening issued forth,

And placed me on the brink to sit, next joined
With wary step my side. I raised mine eyes,
Believing that I Lucifer should see

Where he was lately left, but saw him now
With legs held upward. Let the grosser sort,
Who see not what the point was I had passed,
Bethink them if sore toil oppressed me then.

"Arise," my master cried, "upon thy feet.
The way is long, and much uncouth the road;
And now within one hour and half of noon

The sun returns." It was no palace-hall
Lofty and luminous wherein we stood,
But natural dungeon where ill-footing was
And scant supply of light. "Ere from the
abyss

I separate," thus when risen I began:
"My guide! vouchsafe few words to set me
free

From error's thralldom. Where is now the ice?
How standeth he in posture thus reversed?
And how from eve to mourn in space so brief
Hath the sun made his transit?" He in few
Thus answering spake: "Thou deemest thou
art still

On the other side the centre, where I grasped
The abhorred worm that boreth through the
world.

Thou wast on the other side, so long as I
Descended: when I turned, thou didst o'erpass
That point, to which from every part is dragged
All heavy substance. Thou are now arrived
Under the hemisphere opposed to that,
Which the great continent doth overspread,
And underneath whose canopy expired
The Man, that was born sinless and so lived.
Thy feet are planted on the smallest sphere,
Whose other aspect is Judecca. Morn
Here rises, when there evening sets: and he,
Whose shaggy pile we scaled, yet standeth
fixed,

As at the first. On this part he fell down

From heaven; and th' earth, here prominent
before,

Through fear of him did veil her with the sea,
And to our hemisphere retired. Perchance,
To shun him, was the vacant space left here,
By what of firm land on this side appears,
That sprang aloof." There is a place beneath,
From Belzbub as distant, as extends
The vaulted tomb; discovered not by sight,
But by the sound of brooklet, that descends
This way along the hollow of a rock,
Which, as it winds with no precipitous course,
The wave hath eaten. By that hidden way
My guide and I did enter, to return
To the fair world: and heedless of repose
We climbed, he first, I following his steps,
Till on our view the beautiful lights of heaven
Dawned through a circular opening in the
cave;

Thence issuing we again beheld the stars.

THE END

